

Southern Appalachian Creature Feature Podcasts

Smokies Firewood Rules Goes into Effect

Greetings and welcome to the Southern Appalachian Creature Feature.

I've previously spoke about a proposal by Great Smoky Mountains National Park to limit the spread of invasive insects into the park by limiting the type of firewood that could be brought into the park, and come March 2015, those news rules will go into effect.

Firewood has long been known to be a vector for accidentally moving insects around, which can be a tremendous problem if it happens to be carrying invasive insects – it can very quickly enable those insects to spread their range into virgin territory, to the detriment of native forests. Our hemlock trees are currently dying due to the introduction of the Asian hemlock woolly adelgid. Our Fraser fir trees have suffered from the balsam woolly adelgid. Staff at the Smokies is trying to get ahead of the next potential invasion.

Under the new rules, the only firewood that will be allowed into the park will be firewood that has been heat-treated to kill insects, and bears certification by the U.S. or state department of agriculture. The certified wood will be available from vendors within the park as well as in the gateway communities. Currently more than 85 businesses are selling the treated wood.

Of course campers are still welcome to use dead and down wood they find in the park.

For WNCW and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, this is Gary Peeples.